

OUR BODIES GOD'S TEMPLES

Topic May 15.

I Cor. 3:16-23

Here we come to one of the most wonderful truths of the Bible, the study of which ought to result in blessing and in renewed consecration. The story of man is a picture of God forming him first from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7) and then brooding over the world and reconciling it unto himself (2 Cor. 5:19) until its destiny was accomplished and men are "conformed to the image of his dear Son." Rom. 8:29. The story of sin is a picture of man resisting God, opposing this high destiny and contenting himself in the indulgence of the flesh. But God's will shall prevail and those who oppose it do it to their own destruction. (Prov. 11:19.) It is for us to know the word and the glory of our high calling that we may live worthy of it. (Phil. 3:14; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 4:1.)

The natural body and its works, Gal. 5:19; 1 Cor. 2:24; Rom. 8:8; Rom. 7:18.

The indwelling of God promised, Joel 2:28.

The new birth, John 3:3-5; 1 John 4:7.

The indwelling of Christ a fact in Christians, Rom. 8:9; Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:15, 19; 1 Cor. 12:27.

We also dwell in God, 1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:13.

Conditions of this indwelling, 1 John 4:12; Isa. 57:15; Eph. 3:17; Ps. 140:13; 1 John 4:15.

Our duty in view of God's indwelling

Mortify (make dead) all sensuality, Rom. 7:18-25; Gal. 5:17-24; 1 Cor. 6:13, 18; Rom. 8:9, 10. This does not mean that the body is essentially and wholly evil and therefore to be ignored or maltreated. There is no virtue in self-torture as an end in itself. The dervishes cut and hack themselves, the Hindoo devotees sit on spikes and let the nails grow long and a thousand other things disgusting and horrible, but God wants us to develop and care for our bodies in order that they may be fit instruments for His will. The seed that falls to the ground is not lost but gives its strength to the new life that springs out of it. Even so God wants us to take our natural strength and consecrate it to the use of the Christ-life in us.

Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 9:27; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Cor. 3:23; 1 Thess. 5:23; Jas. 3:6. It is not God's will therefore that sin and disease should rule these bodies which are his temple and as we look for deliverance from one so ought we from the other.

Matt. 8:17; Eph. 5:30; Jas. 5:13-18; Luke 13:16; 3 John 2. Our destiny. The "sanctification of the spirit." 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 8:29. The redemption of the body. Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:42-44.

POINTS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Since our bodies are God's temple what attitude ought we maintain toward the use of liquor and tobacco? what toward indulgence in pastries mild stimulants, etc.? Isa. 52:11.
2. Will God use a person given to self-indulgence? Why not?
3. What is meant by loving God with all our "strength"? Matt. 22:37.
4. What bearing has this lesson on the temperance cause?
5. What are some things young people often do that are inconsistent with the profession of being temples of God?
7. What can we do to promote plain, righteous living?

C. F. YODER.

Helpful Suggestions

Forward

The pure heart is a holy altar.

Physical excesses are irreverence.

Good health honors God.

Care for the body may be made worship of God.

Every Christian is a high priest over one of God's temples.

The incense of prayer should always be burning in God's human temples.

To honor the body for the sake of Him who dwells within is to honor God himself.

Man is not a body, but a soul. "We have bodies," says one, "but we are souls."

Dagon and the Ark cannot abide together. God will not dwell in a heart where sin is entertained.

He is a vandal and a wretch who would shatter one of the windows of a grand cathedral. What shall we say then of the greater offender who mars and soils and bestializes God's fairest and holiest temple?

Even the most worldly minded would be shocked to see a horse fair held in a church. Yet it occasions no comment for a Christian to smoke and chew tobacco. Which of these two defilements of God's temple think you is the greater.

In a noble sense we do not make enough of our bodies; in an ignoble sense we make too much of them. We treat them as our masters, rather than as our servants. They are not God; they are only God's temples. Why then should we care more for a fine coat to cover the body than for a pure heart to dwell within it?

The Christian Life

DAY BY DAY

Lord, give me not this day excessive ecstasy,
But active, living faith to put full trust in thee;
Not strength for mighty deeds I shall not have to do,
But patience for the toils that thread the moments thro.

Give me less anxious care for things beyond my reach,
But self-control at home thy perfect love to teach;

Not wisdom for deep things my brain may never find,
But for each hour's demand a voice and spirit kind.

That others love me more I dare not, will not, ask,
But that my love endure thro each repulsive task;
Nor will I even plead thy guiding hand to see,
But, thro the darksome ways, for closer walk with thee.

—Mrs. L. M. Beal Bateman.

PRAYER MEETING TOPICS

THE PROPHETS—MICAH—NO. 1

1. Biography

1. Inhabitant of Moresheth—Gath, a village of the low plains of Philistia. v. 1.
2. Time—about 745 B. C.
3. Contemporary kings,—Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, Jer. 26:18.

4. Being a provincial by birth, it is probable that, unlike Isaiah, Micah was a prophet from the common people. (a) This is shown by scope of his prophecy which has nothing to do with politics, like Isaiah, but with the oppressions of the poor and the afflictions of the lowly, ch. 2:1-3, ch. 3:1-4, and 3:9-11.

5. Like all the prophets God has made him "a man of strife" whose task was rebuke of sin and that among the heads of the nation.

6. The example of the nation's attitude towards his prophecies is shown by the elders

of Israel in Jeremiah's time. Jer. 26:8-24.

II. Lessons

1. The task of the prophets was reformation of the church of that day. (a) the first need of today in all lands is a living church walking with God.

2. The second part of their task was the reformation of the nation, or a social reform. (a) A religion that does not make better citizens can hardly be called Christian. (b) The church should be the formative agency for righteousness in a community.

3. As Israel needed repentance and forsaking of sin before God could bless and use her, so today, the covetous, those who oppress the poor in the business, and the proud and selfish in the church need first repentance.

4. Wrong-doing in a church member is as bad as in any one else.

5. The church needs men today who will "tell the house of Jacob their sins."

J. L. GILLIN.

HOLINESS

J. C. CASSEL

I have time and again written upon some phase of the question of holiness, or sanctification, but as it is an inexhaustible subject there is room for further consideration of it. There is a story of a preacher who preached upon faith for a long time until some of his congregation got tired of it and told him about it. He replied that as soon as they had *faith and exercised it* he would go on to something else. Just so I feel about the subject of holiness; as soon as my brethren will accept it in its true Bible sense as a second definite experience I will proceed to discuss something else.

A writer in a recent article in the EVANGELIST quotes Heb. 12:14, which reads thus: "Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," and then goes on to say, "We do not understand the scripture terms sanctification or holiness to imply a definite, momentary, second work of grace, but much more than that." The thought "*much more than that*" is a rich one because it is pure gospel, but that which precedes it is anti-gospel. Just suffer a simple question. If sanctification is a question of progression altogether, and no man shall see God without it, at what period, or at what stage of the Christian's experience does he become holy enough to see God? Is every regenerated soul holy? If so, why did not Paul say without regeneration no man shall see the Lord. This is surely true but he steps up much higher and says without *holiness* no man shall see the Lord. Now in the course of a Christian progression, how much must he progress before he can see God? How can he know that he has progressed far enough to see God, if there is nothing definite, or momentary about it? If this were true man would have to live in uncertainty all his life and holiness would be the result of human effort, instead of a gift of divine grace. Men grow in grace and knowledge,